

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry
2 comprising the steps of:
 - 3 (a) receiving an inquiry requesting the price of an item;
 - 4 (b) determining the price of the item based on a set of predetermined criteria;
 - 5 (c) modifying the determined price based on application of various
6 predetermined rules;
 - 7 (d) determining whether or not the modified price is to be compared to a target
8 price; and
 - 9 (e) providing a price quote that reflects a weighted price, the weighted price
10 being either the modified price or the target price.
- 1 2. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 1, wherein application of the various predetermined rules results in
3 said determined price.
- 1 3. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 1, wherein said predetermined criteria is selected from at least one of
3 the group consisting of terms of a contract, terms of a market price program, terms of
4 a requote, and selections from a reference price table.
- 1 4. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 1, wherein said various predetermined rules are selected from at least
3 one of the group consisting of a set of business rules, a set of value added services
4 rules, and a set of price channel conversion rules.
- 1 5. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 4, wherein said set of business rules is comprised of filter criteria
3 selected from information from at least one of the group consisting of customer
4 identifier, customer category, customer classification, geography, sales channel,
5 contract, competition, target pricing, quantity, date, delivery schedule, part identifier,
6 product type, product family, and value added requirements.

6. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 4, wherein said price channel conversion rules are applied where the inquiry is received from a distributor.

7. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein the weighted price is selected from at least one of the group consisting of a highest price, lowest price, and an initially quoted price.

8. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein determining a price of the item based on predetermined criteria further comprises the sub-steps of ascertaining whether the predetermined criteria involves terms of a market price program or terms of a contract, or terms of a requote or selections from a reference price table.

9. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 8, wherein ascertaining whether the predetermined criteria involves terms of a market price program or terms of a contract further comprises the sub-steps of ascertaining whether the inquiry involves a distributor, wherein involvement of a distributor results in application of a set of price channel conversion rules.

10. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 9, wherein said price channel conversion rules are selected from at least one of the group consisting of distributor cost and distributor resale.

11. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 8, wherein ascertaining whether the predetermined criteria involves terms of a requote or selections from a reference price table further comprises the sub-steps of providing a quote response that reflects an initial quoted price where the criteria involves terms of a requote and providing a quote response that reflects one of a plurality of selections from the reference price table where the criteria does not involve terms of a requote.

12. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 1, wherein modifying the determined price based on application of

3 said various predetermined rules further comprises the steps of applying one or more
4 of a plurality of business rule types where a set of business rules apply, applying one
5 of a plurality of value added services charges where a set of value added services
6 rules apply, applying a conversion factor where a set of price channel conversion rules
7 applies.

1 13. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 12, wherein the plurality of business rule types is selected from at
3 least one of the group consisting of a column rule, a columnX rule, a discount rule, an
4 incremental rule, a markup rule, a please call rule, and a sale rule.

1 14. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 12, wherein the plurality of value added services charges are
3 dependent upon services selected from at least one of the group consisting of special
4 handling, packaging, and programming.

1 15. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 12, wherein the conversion factor is selected from at least one of the
3 group consisting of a markup from an OEM price to a distributor resale factor and a
4 conversion from a distributor resale to a distributor cost factor, wherein the
5 conversion from the distributor resale to the distributor cost factor is dependent on
6 distributor registration.

1 16. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry comprising:
3 (a) a code segment that receives an inquiry requesting a price of an item;
4 (b) a code segment that determines a price of the item based on a set of
5 predetermined criteria;
6 (c) a code segment that modifies the determined price based on application of
7 various predetermined rules;
8 (d) a code segment that determines whether or not to compare the modified
9 price to a target price; and
10 (e) a code segment that provides a price quote that reflects a weighted price,
11 the weighted price being either the modified price or the target price.

1 17. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 application of the various predetermined rules results in a code segment that provides
4 said determined price as the response to the inquiry.

1 18. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 said predetermined criteria is selected from at least one of the group consisting of
4 terms of a contract, terms of a market price program, terms of a requote, and
5 selections from a reference price table.

1 19. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 said various predetermined rules are selected from at least one of the group consisting
4 of a set of business rules, a set of value added services rules, and a set of price channel
5 conversion rules.

1 20. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 19, wherein
3 said set of business rules is comprised of a filter criteria code segment selected from
4 information from at least one of the group consisting of customer identifier, customer
5 category, customer classification, geography, sales channel, contract, competition,
6 target pricing, quantity, date, delivery schedule, part identifier, product type, product
7 family, and value added requirements.

1 21. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 19, wherein
3 said price channel conversion rules are applied where the inquiry is received from a
4 distributor.

1 22. A computer program embodied on a computer readable program for providing
2 automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as recited in claim 16, wherein
3 the weighted price is selected from at least one of the group consisting of a highest
4 price, lowest price, and an initially quoted price.

- 1 23. A system for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry
2 comprising:
- 3 (a) means for receiving an inquiry requesting a price of an item;
 - 4 (b) means for determining a price of the item based on a set of predetermined
5 criteria;
 - 6 (c) means for modifying the determined price based on application of various
7 predetermined rules;
 - 8 (d) means for selectively comparing the modified price to a target price; and
 - 9 (e) means for providing a price quote that reflects a weighted price, the
10 weighted price being either the modified price or the target price.
- 1 24. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein application of the various predetermined rules results in
3 said determined price.
- 1 25. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein said predetermined criteria is selected from at least one of
3 the group consisting of terms of a contract, terms of a market price program, terms of
4 a requote, and selections from a reference price table.
- 1 26. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein said various predetermined rules are selected from at
3 least one of the group consisting of a set of business rules, a set of value added
4 services rules, and a set of price channel conversion rules.
- 1 27. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 26, wherein said set of business rules is comprised of filter criteria
3 selected from information from at least one of the group consisting of customer
4 identifier, customer category, customer classification, geography, sales channel,
5 contract, competition, target pricing, quantity, date, delivery schedule, part identifier,
6 product type, product family, and value added requirements.

1 28. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 26, wherein said price channel conversion rules are applied where the
3 inquiry is received from a distributor.

1 29. A method for providing automated delivery of a response to a pricing inquiry as
2 recited in claim 23, wherein the weighted price is selected from at least one of the
3 group consisting of a highest price, lowest price, and an initially quoted price.